

## Use Your Stash

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*"You begin with the possibilities of the material." Robert Rauschenberg*

### Materials Needed

Unused art supplies

Your journal or work surface

PVA or Gel Medium as collage adhesive (I like Golden Regular Gloss) and a brush (I like 1" bristle brushes) OR

Favorite Glue Stick: Coccolina, Scotch Permanent, Tombo, Avery

(anything labeled permanent)

Rubber Stamps & inkpads (I like Staz-On)

Collage Ephemera

Pens to write with: Sakura Glaze and Souffle Pens, Pitt Pens from Faber Castell, Zig writer and vellum pens, Sharpie Poster Paint Pen (waterbased), Molotow One4All markers, .35 Rapidosketch, etc...

Decorative Tape (washi, paper, kawaii, deco, etc...)

Waxed paper      Paper Towels/rags

Favorite acrylics (I use Blick Matte Acrylics, Holbein Acrylics, Nova color to name a few of my favorites.)

Favorite brushes (I like bristle to smaller brushes for more detail work)

### Starting

**I like to start all of my art adventures as if I was a mad scientist. How can I take my favorite supplies and use them in new ways? How can I take unused supplies and combine them with my favorites?**

**One thing that has helped me that may help you is to rotate your stash. When you are tired of using certain supplies or even on a regular basis (once a week, once a month), rotate what you have and try it.**

I set an intention with each journal that I start to try to do something new and different. I want to learn as I work and create new pages. My goal with this book was to play with unused or forgotten about supplies on my pages and to try to push myself into learning new layering techniques and ideas as I did so. I tend to be very particular about the focal images that I use and I gave myself permission to really play and not worry if I ended up painting over images and reworking them completely. Is there something new that you are eager to try with your book?

There is never a wrong way to begin. Open your book. Start on the first page. Start in the middle. Work one page at a time or work across two pages to make one giant page. Turn your book sideways. Work upside down. Paint the page first. Collage the page first. Journal on the page first. It. Is. All. Good.

I'm going to share with you how I began in this book and what I started to do on my pages. You can do the following exercises as is or you can take what you need from them. I will encourage you to get dirty, make mistakes, make a mess, laugh, cry, have fun and experiment. You absolutely cannot mess this up. Trust the process.

I tend to use a lot of people, specifically, women in my journal pages. I use these images to represent me. That said, use the images that interest you. You can use people, animals, inanimate objects, abstract images, your own cut up artwork, photographs, letterforms, quotes, etc... Use what interests YOU in your work.

I've also found that it helps to limit the amount of supplies in front of you. You don't need all of your collage materials. Pick a handful of favorite images (aim for no more than twelve) and a small pile (think no more than 25 pieces) that appeal to you right now. Carefully choose a few of your favorite color pens, markers, stencils and stamps. Work from what you have in front of you. Make it work.

Pages built in stages are better than none at all. If you can't do a full page in one setting, set your timer and try for five to fifteen minutes a day. If you can do 5-15 minutes of artwork every day in a few days, you'll have a finished page. If you want to make art, make art.

Don't be afraid to copy. The great masters encouraged copying as a learning tool when they taught. Copy. Make mistakes. Experiment. Ask questions. The more that you make, there will come a time when you will want your own voice to come through.

Date your pages. If you don't want to date your pages, date the inside cover of your journal when you start and when you add. It's nice to note your process and progress of growth. While you're there, add your contact information in case anything happens to your journal.

When I open my journal, everything around me stops. It's my time. I don't worry or think about anything else. I focus on what's in front of me at that moment. If I am limited in my time, I may set a timer to help me (remember what I wrote above about pages in stages.) I usually start by sorting through my collage material. I'll select my tools to use based on how I am feeling and what I am thinking at that moment in time. Sometimes I sit down with a specific thought or idea in mind but mostly it's about showing up, unfolding, being present and doing the work. I'll flip through my collage material, touching the papers and seeing what calls to me. I'll select one main image to use and then maybe one, two or three extra "supporting characters" (other secondary focal images to add interest and emphasis on the page. I don't always add more than one main image but when I do, this is what I think about. Is there a story I am trying to tell? Does that image fit the page? Does it help to set the scene? Do I like it? Does it interest me? Does it work?) I'll then choose a handful of background papers. Sometimes I look at my focal image and look for colors that are in my focal image and use more of those colors around the page. Other times, I want to add colors that aren't there so I'll select three to four colors that I really like and find background papers in those colors. Some days, I cut the focal image out and glue it down after I put down the background papers. Other days, I'll tear the focal image, glue it down and build a background around it.

There is never a right way or a wrong way to start the page. Think about how you are feeling, what you are thinking and just jump in.

A page can always be altered, changed and added to. Don't give up on it and don't let it get you down. You have an entire book to fill.

When I begin my work, I am focused on my thoughts and feelings. Have I heard or read something recently that stuck with me? Did I see an image that packed a powerful punch? Was it something I read or saw in a film? What about that discussion we had last night? What about that book passage I read that made me think outside of the box? Can I use these thoughts, feelings, ideas to create a page?

When I sit down to make a page, I try to think about one thing (an event, a comment, a conversation, something I was a witness to) that sticks in my mind. Can I use that thing to spark a page? Sometimes I'll write my idea in pencil on the page first (so I don't forget or so that it leads me down a path.) One friend keeps a small notebook in her purse of things that she hears, sees or experiences as journal sparks.

I look for little sparks in daily occurrences. It might be a glimmer of inspiration in something that I read in a book or saw in a film. It might be my response to something heard or read in the news. There are journal sparks everywhere and it's all about paying attention to what interests you and catches your eye/ear/heart.

When you begin your pages, select images and background paper which are of interest to you right now. Limit your choices. Touch your papers. Narrow things down and use the first things that you see that make your heart beat fast or raise your eyebrow. Look at your image and figure out (don't over think it) if you should cut out the image vs tearing it.

Look at your papers and see if you can use them in different ways. Cutting vs tearing vs cutting things out of the papers, etc...

Play with how you layer your image. Crop the images (instead of using an entire image.)

Play with size and scale (combine different or similar sized images.)

Use portions of an image instead of the entire thing.

Don't stop with sticking an image down. Layer another image (or a portion of an image) on top of it. Add paint. Draw. Doodle. Make marks. Stencil. Journal. Push your envelope.

Make marks on your pages. Small. Big.

Trace elements of your focal or background images.

When I sit down to create a page, I try to create something entirely new and fresh each time. I try to learn from each page. Sometimes it is a new way of combining images. Other times it is a new way of adding

and experimenting with color. Maybe it is a new way of adding text. Sometimes I am shocked by what I journal. Each page offers and presents opportunity and growth. Date your pages. Don't be afraid to try something new on your pages. Your journal should be your safe place to experiment, explore, express and play.

## Exercises

1. Pick up something you've never used before. How can you use it on your page? Is it a new paint color? Is it a spray? Is it a water soluble crayon? Start by starting your page as you always do. Try using collage materials and then paint. Let it dry. Then step back. Take a deep breath and grab your unused art supply. Make marks. Splatter color. Add it to your page in some way. Now grab your focal image and add an image to your page. Take that same tool again and add more of it to your page. How can you make what's on the page work with some of your favorite tools?
2. Use pieces of rub-ons on your page. Try using them right across your focal image.
3. Got gold leaf or foil? Let's paint your page with several layers first. Now let everything dry. Use a bit of gold leaf or foil here and there on your page. (Remember with leafing/foiling you need an adhesive that stays tacky.) Let the adhesive fully dry. Once it's dry, it should be sticky or tacky to the touch (NOT WET) and you can lay your foiling or leafing (wrong side down) into the tacky glue. Take a bone folder, popsicle stick or the back of an old spoon and burnish. Pull off the excess foil/leafing. What happens if you paint over this?
4. Packing tape transfers. Grab some packing tape and some xeroxed or color copies. Place the packing tape sticky side down onto the xeroxed image. Burnish with a bone folder. Soak it in water and peel off the back of the paper. Your image should transfer to the tape. Sometimes it is still tacky (once dry) and you can burnish it onto your page. Other times you need to use gel medium. How can you combine packing tape transfers with an unused art supply? What about using rub-on letters across part of the transfer (once done?)
5. Paint on glitter or any kind of textural medium. Use gel medium to adhere glitter (or sand or dirt or...) to the page. Let it dry. Paint it.
6. Pencils (regular pencils, colored pencils or watercolor pencils.) Make marks on your pages. Draw simple shapes. Write/journal on your pages. If the pencil is water soluble, use a water brush pen and retrace what you wrote/drew to move the pencil marking around. Color in bits of marks with your pencils. Push down hard as you write. Write softly.
7. Water soluble crayons. Make marks. Write. Draw using the WS crayon. Blend it into the page using an old dry rag/paper towel OR blend it into the page using acrylics or an acrylic medium.
8. Metallics. Use metallics and then paint on top of them. I love how subtle the shine is. Play with metallic paint, metallic ink pads, metallic pens/markers. What shiny things do you have that you can put paint on top of?
9. Gesso. Yes, you know that you can coat your page with gesso. What about embedding things into wet gesso? Making marks into wet gesso? Painting with wet gesso (and acrylics or water soluble crayons/pencils?)
10. Your scissors. Yes, I know that you know that you can cut with them but can you scratch into your wet (or dried) paint with them? Can you cut out fun shapes (think Matisse like) with them

and magazine/book pages? Can you layer these cut outs alone or combine them with paint to create new pieces?

11. Look around your home (office or studio space or the dollar store) and find new toys to paint and/or make marks with. Think pizza cutters, toothbrushes, sponges and whatever else you can find. Limit how much you find/use and use it!
12. Embed tissue paper into wet paint. Layer tissue on top of tissue on top of tissue. What other transparent items can you use?
13. Use your rubber stamps. Use them in bits. Use them with ink pads (or acrylic paints but clean them immediately after stamping.) Make masks and stamp only a part of the image. Ink up the stamp, stamp it on scrap paper and then stamp your surface for a ghost print. Stamp into wet paint (clean the stamp right away.)
14. Get your sprays out. Combine sprays with acrylics. Spray and dye book and magazine pages. Soak the pages in spray ink and see what happens. Embrace your inner stencil artist combining your stencils with different sprays.
15. Apply colors that you don't use a lot of the time (or colors you don't like) and now grab your pens and markers and WRITE. Make marks. FILL the page with pen work. Partially paint over some of what you did. Play with adding the focal image and repeating layers of pen/marker work partially on top.
16. Use watercolor on top of acrylic or vice versa.
17. Use your water soluble markers and a water brush pen to blend color on top of painted papers.
18. Inks. Drop. Drip. Splatter. Blow (with a straw.) Manipulate (let ink run down a side and turn your paper over and over to let it run down the page.) Write. Draw. Make marks.
19. Paint the page black. Let dry. Use bright colors on top and add an unused art supply into the mix.
20. Paint and use an unused art supply. Let dry. Using a different color(s) fill the page with one word or a fragment of a sentence. In other words, WRITE BIG.
21. Paint your page with several layers of color. Let dry. Now paint your collage materials with totally different colors. Let dry. How can you combine them together on the page?
22. Put some barrier cream on your hands (or gloves) and paint with only your fingers and/or hands. Try putting down collage ephemera and then painting.
23. Do you usually work in a specific layout style? Mix it up. Work on a separate piece of found paper. Do your collage and painting. As this is drying, paint a new page in your journal (think layers. See what happens if you use some different colors than this other page.) Now take that collaged and painted page and cut it into shapes. Use portions of it on your freshly painted journal page. Play with some mark making tools to bring the page together. Use your stencils and paint or markers to add marks to the page. Paint your stencils and stamp with them.
24. Save the dried paint on your palette. Peel it up and use it in your work. Glue it down with gel medium or PVA. Cut it into shapes or (sometimes) you can use your punches with it.
25. Speaking of punches? Have any of those lying around? Find a couple of magazine pages that are visually appealing to you. Punch out shapes from two or three pages. Now use those shapes on your page. Paint, stencil, draw, doodle, make marks over them. See how you can alter these punched out shapes.

26. Turn your journal upside down before you start. Start collageing and painting the page. Every now and then rotate the page. Do this at least twice. Now put the book right side up. How can you make it work?
27. Think of a favorite song, quote, movie, book passage, etc... Can you use this as a starting point for a page?
28. Look at the work of a favorite artist. Use their paint palette. Try it with paint, collage only, colored pencils, water colors, etc... Limit your medium to ONE thing and see how you can replicate it.
29. Write with your acrylics either in the tube or squeeze bottle.
30. Color hard with water soluble crayons and/or water soluble pencils. Use small amounts of acrylics to move the colors around the page.
31. Stickers. Cut them in half. Use them as is. Use the waste around the stickers as is or paint over them for texture.
32. Acrylic mediums. What have you bought that you haven't played with? Gloss medium? Mix a tiny bit of paint with a lot of gloss medium for a glaze effect. Use your glazing liquid 50/50 with your acrylics. Paint over your micaceous Iron Oxide. Mix up your mica chips with acrylics. Make up test swatches or pages in your book. Pull out your Mad Scientist and see what happens when you take a little of this and a little of that acrylic wise!

## **Journaling**

When writing on your pages, don't let the lack of white space stop you. Play with your pen colors, tip sizes, style of your writing (uppercase, printing, cursive, etc...), size (large, small, etc...), direction (down, across, circular, etc...) See how many different ways you can write on your pages. I like to experiment with my writing and see if I can vary each page. Sometimes I write a lot while other times I write very little. It all depends on my mood and what I feel like I want or have to say on the pages. If I feel that I have a lot to say, I might write small.

Here are some prompts that might spark not only journaling ideas but entire pages.

1. Color.
2. Texture.
3. Line.
4. Shape.
5. Movement.
6. A favorite artist.
7. A favorite gallery visit.
8. An artist you don't appreciate.
9. An art form you love.
10. An art form you don't appreciate.
11. Land or ocean.
12. Light or dark.
13. Flowers.

14. The breeze.
15. Sunlight.
16. Moon.
17. I close my eyes.
18. Shoes.
19. Taste.
20. The unknown.